

Bavarian News

Vol. 7, Nr. 1

U.S. Army Garrisons Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Ansbach, Schweinfurt and Garmisch

January 19, 2011

Team Cherokee comes home



Team Cherokee arrives with a bang, Jan. 7. (From top right to bottom) Romeo Velasquez and Eric Lewis await the team's arrival. Sgt. Shawn Forbis embraces wife Melissa and sons Timothy (left) and Leon. Staff Sgt. Gary Terwilliger greets baby Makayla while son Tyler looks on.

Return marks end of 1-4th Inf. Regt.'s five-year mission

Story and photos by

Mark Iacampo

USAG Hohenfels Public Affairs

HOHENFELS, Germany — Soldiers from C Company, 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, returned to

Hohenfels in the early morning hours Jan. 7 from their nearly five-month deployment in the Zabul Province of Afghanistan.

Bursting through a welcome home banner like a victorious team at a homecoming football game, Team Cherokee was greeted by a cheering crowd of family, friends and fellow Soldiers.

Not even the predawn arrival time could discourage family members from being on hand to welcome their

heroes home. Barbara Fitzgerald and her two children, Nate and Antoinette, grabbed front row seats while awaiting the return of her husband Staff Sgt. Daniel Fitzgerald.

"I gave the kids the option of having a babysitter come over or coming with me," Fitzgerald said.

"We want to come get daddy!" said Nate.

Team Cherokee's return marks the end of the 1-4th Infantry Regiment's five-year mission in support

of the Combined Task Force Zabul.

Col. John M. Spiszer, Joint Multinational Readiness Center commander, congratulated the team on a job well done before uttering the command "dismissed" and opening the flood-gates as well-wishers surged forward to greet their loved ones.

Staff Sgt. Carlos Velasquez's sentiment echoed the whole company's feelings.

"It feels good to be home," he said.



Defender 6 sends

IMCOM

Community a vision for the future

Like many others this time of year, I have been reflecting on the past 12 months and looking forward to the new year. In my professional capacity, I am focusing on the future of the Installation Management Community. Specifically, what should the Installation Management Community look like a year from now?

I have been asking this question of Installation Management personnel during meetings, town halls, and garrison visits. After all, the dedicated professionals at the garrisons and headquarters are doing the work on a daily basis; they know what it takes to deliver the facilities, programs and services that support our Soldiers and families.

I have also been seeking feedback from Soldiers, families and leaders through a number of avenues, including installation visits, the Family Forums at the Association of the United States

See LYNCH, page 17



Dr. Carol Onyango works on one of her morning patients at the Schweinfurt Dental Clinic.

Clinic aims to root out children's tooth decay

Story and photo by

Charles Stadlander

USAG Schweinfurt Public Affairs

SCHWEINFURT, Germany — At the Schweinfurt dental clinic, the day starts early. The first patients here are busy people, and immediately after they climb out of the dentist's chair they often head straight to school with lower lips drooped from anesthesia.

Dr. Carol Onyango is the clinic's new pediatric dentist, and she hopes to instill good oral health practices to the children of the Schweinfurt military community. She started at the end of October, and fills an important role vacated when the last dedicated pediatric specialist left in the spring.

"Have you been flossing?" she asked her 8 a.m. appointment. "Every day?" she pressed.

The boy in the chair meekly stated that he may forget once in a while.

"Make sure it's every day, and I mean it," said Onyango (who is probably better known as Dr. Carol), as she picked up a ring to demonstrate how she was about to fit it around the patient's tooth.

While Schweinfurt's dental clinic always provided comprehensive service, this addition to the staff cements

See DR. CAROL, page 17



Ansbach beckons

The Franconian city of Ansbach is packed with history and offers outdoor activities that are just a short drive away.

Tax time

It's time to collect those W-2s, 1099s. A few items have changed since last season, but the tax experts have all the answers.

See page 3.

Sky's the limit

A Hohenfels High alum returns to encourage current students to shoot for the stars. See page 14.

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Have Bible, will travel

Six chaplains provide guidance to more than 4,000 deployed Soldiers

Story and photo by

Sgt. Jerry Wilson

2SCR Public Affairs

ZABUL, Afghanistan — The spiritual welfare of each trooper of the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment rests squarely on the shoulders of the Regimental Chaplain Corps. During their current deployment to Afghanistan, six chaplains provide service to more than 4,000 Dragoons stretched over an area of operation the size of Texas.

"There is one chaplain for each squadron," explains 2SCR's Regimental Chaplain (Maj.) Vaioa Leau. "Take 2nd Squadron for example. He has more than nine locations that are attached to Forward Operating Base Apache and all the outside FOBs he has to cover."

Deep roots

The Chaplain Corps has been around since 1775. Following the creation of the infantry as a branch of the Army, the Continental Congress acting on orders from Gen. George Washington, established the Chaplain Corps making it the second oldest branch in the U.S. Army. It was Washington's concern for the morale and moral character of his Soldiers that prompted the belief that the military needed paid religious leaders to care for spiritual needs. Since then, wherever there are Soldiers deployed, there has been a chaplain in their midst.

Many Army chaplains spend a large part of their deployments traveling from outpost to outpost offering religious



Deployed forces

Chaplain Doug Hogsten joins choir members (from left to right) Sgt. Darlena Cherry, Spc. Jerome Jones and Pfc. Kathleen Dickerson in a song during a gospel service at FOB Lagman.

services and counseling to the Soldiers in the field. One such traveler is Capt. Mario Rosario, a Catholic priest from the 96th Aviation Support Battalion, 101st Combat Aviation Brigade. In addition to supporting the Soldiers of his unit, Father Rosario spends much of his time providing for the needs of 2SCR's Catholic troopers.

"There are Catholic Soldiers all over," Rosario said. "Even if there is just one or two on a COP they need to be provided with religious support."

Rosario spends about 20 days a month traveling throughout RC-South providing services wherever needed. He credits his commander who values religious support and understands the need to travel.

Above and beyond

For many of our Dragoon men of the cloth, being a chaplain is more than just a job; it is a calling to nurture their fellow Soldiers. That was one call that took Capt. Doug Hogsten, chaplain for 2SCR's FIRES Squadron more than 22 years to answer. He was enlisted as a

mortarman from 1984-87.

"My company commander told me he was going to get me to re-enlist," he explained. "I told him that when the bush by my barracks window burned and was not consumed, and the voice of God came out of it and told me to re-enlist. Then, we would talk."

Little did Hogsten know that in 2006, he would feel that pull back to the military and join the Chaplain Corps.

For more than 234 years, chaplains have been caring for Soldiers. From Valley Forge to Afghanistan, they have provided counseling and spiritual nourishment for service members faced with the rigorous demands of deployments. When the death of a Soldier occurs, they comfort and they provide special religious services, giving Soldiers a little taste of home during the holidays.

Whether they are preaching from the pulpit on Sunday morning or providing a sympathetic ear to a Soldier in need, military chaplains have been and continue to be an important part of the U.S. military.



Bavarian News

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Water Tower art by Dane Gray

Commander's Message



New year brings new opportunities

Gruess Gott! 2010 brought a lot of challenges to the community with continued construction, reintegration of the 172nd Infantry Brigade, deployment of the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment and several other units.

The garrison and its community members participated in several key events, including the 100-year anniversary of the Grafenwoehr Training Area, which bolstered the already robust relationship between the Army and surrounding communities, and ESPN SportsCenter's live broadcast on Veteran's Day, which introduced our community to more than 19 million viewers back in the U.S.



2011 promises to be equally a challenging year with redeployments, deployments, construction of a new health clinic on Rose Barracks, the 650th anniversary of the city of Grafenwoehr, and continuing to strengthen our partnerships with our neighbors in the surrounding communities.

Social networking

While the *Bavarian News* is a community staple in terms of how the garrison gets the message out, we

are also taking strides to ensure our social networking via Facebook, Twitter and Flickr are effective and provide you with the information you need, when you need it.

Since we began a concentrated effort to incorporate reaching the community through Facebook two months ago, we've increased our "friends" by more than 300 percent. Currently, we get more than 13,000 hits each day and more than 1,000 community members receive updates on everything from high school basketball games and events out in town to weather updates and road conditions.

Please help us in our effort to improve communications to the customer by telling us how we could better use of social network sites by sending constructive ideas to usaggnews@eur.army.mil.

Suicide prevention

Suicide prevention is easy to identify with a singular month since that is how we often label it. Recently, the community has seen a few successful interventions. It took courage for people to take the time to ensure that everything was OK in someone's life. Suicide prevention is about knowing one another and caring for each other.

"It's OK to Seek Help" should be ingrained in all of us, but also should be more than a catch phrase; it

should remind us that we each share the responsibility to take care of one another.

Congratulations

I am proud and honored to announce that Reggie Womack of DHR has earned the title of USAG Grafenwoehr Employee of the Year for 2010. Please join me in congratulating Reggie for this significant accomplishment in his military / civilian career.

Grafenwoehr is truly a special place not because of where it's located, but because of the people who make up this incredible garrison team. We are indeed fortunate to have folks such as Reggie who truly enjoy what they do, set high standards, and come to work every day dedicated to serving our Soldiers, families and civilians and helping make our community a better place to work and live.

Lastly, on behalf of the garrison, I'd like to wish everyone a happy, healthy and successful new year (froehes neues Jahr)! Thank you for being such a great community and thanks to all of our partners who make Grafenwoehr such a great place to be.

Col. Vann Smiley
Commander, U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr

Fashion statements a no-no when in uniform

by Sgt. Maj. Lisa Hunter
U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs

HEIDELBERG, Germany — This winter seems to have brought some new Army Combat Uniform fashion trends. Surely you've seen the green microfleece cap with edges rolled, or the GORE-TEX jacket unzipped for a more casual look.

Of course, that's not how they're supposed to be worn. For that matter, this whole ACU fashion trend should be pretty simple. After all, it's a uniform. That means we all dress alike. But some Soldiers like living on the cutting edge of ACU fashion, which means they are not following regulations.

To help those who may be confused about what's in vogue this year (e.g. what's authorized) before the "uniform police" nab them, I consulted U.S. Army Europe's subject-matter expert on this matter: USAREUR Command Sgt. Major Thomas Capel. I also did a little research, such as reading over the USAREUR Uniform and Appearance Policy Standards Memorandum, dated Dec. 9, 2010, and, of course, Army Regulation 670-1 (Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia), the absolute Bible on Army uniforms. Here's the "Cliff's notes" version of what the experts say are the "do's" and "don'ts," for today's ACU ensembles.

The basics

First, we'll look at the basic uniform. It's hard to go wrong here. The ACU shirt should be zipped and Velcro fasteners closed. Sleeves should never be rolled or cuffed. All the basic items — rank insignia, nametape, unit and combat patches, etc. — are still the standard accoutrements. In the case of trousers, length is not an issue. Soldiers can go "old school," wearing the pants legs tucked into their boots, or they can blouse the pants legs using commercially procured "blousers" or the ACUs' convenient built-in drawstrings. Regardless of which method you choose, blousing the trouser legs below the third boot eyelet is definitely a fashion "don't."



Photos by Sgt. Daniel J. Nichols

Outerwear

From there we'll move onto outerwear. You'll see the GORE-TEX jacket and the Generation II and III items, such as black or green fleece jackets, everywhere this year. They are all in style this winter, which means they are authorized for wear. The black fleece might be last year's fashion, but it's still authorized. But Soldiers who insist on being seen in nothing but the very latest styles can stop by their local Central Issue Facility and make the change to the green fleece.

No matter which jacket you go for this season — even if you decide to mix and match — remember that the snaps are to be fastened and the zipper should be zipped up to the neck. As for accessories, Soldiers can wear either pin-on or embroidered slip-on rank in the center of the jacket. The nametape — in quarter-inch block letters — should be worn on the left sleeve pocket only. Do not have your name embroidered directly on the jacket pocket. This takes away from the style — and it's not authorized. U.S. Army tape, nametape and rank are to be worn on the fleece jacket.

Headgear

Let's move on to headgear. The beret is the hat we will all be seeing this year, as it's the only authorized headgear for garrison wear. No matter how much you like your patrol cap, keep it on the shelf for special occasions, such as performing maintenance in the motor pool or training events. The commander can authorize the wear of the patrol cap in transit to training events, but trips to the PX are not considered training. Authorization to wear the PC is clearly one of those cases of, "It's better to get permission first, than to ask forgiveness later."

When you wear your patrol cap, rank insignia should be affixed to the front and the nametape should be worn on the back. When it comes to the PC, less is more, specifically when it comes to adding fashion accessories like "cat eyes" reflective strips. The only Soldiers authorized to sew cat eyes on the back of the PC are observer/controllers. And even O/Cs are only authorized to wear them while they are "in the training box," Capel said.

Microfleece cap

Here we come to the most misunderstood uniform item to come along in a long time: the green microfleece cap. The green microfleece cap is a "do" when worn with the Improved Physical Fitness Uniform. It's also a great ACU accessory to wear when pulling prolonged duties, such as guard duty, in freezing temperatures. But it's not the fashion statement for short walks, say, from your car to the PX. Like the patrol cap, it needs to stay on the shelf most of the time. When authorized to wear it, the cap should be pulled down snugly on the head. And don't roll the ends — not authorized!

Jewelry

Of course, no ensemble is complete without the right accessories. We'll start with jewelry. The rule to remember is to leave the "bling" with your civilian wardrobe. Any jewelry Soldiers wear must be authorized. That means two rings (a wedding set counts as one), a wristwatch, and an identification bracelet such as a medical alert bracelet or MIA/POW bracelet (in black or silver only), with only one item worn on each wrist.

When it comes to body piercing, the Army just says no — at least while you're in uniform or on an Army installation or other facilities under Army control. That means do not "attach, affix or display objects, articles or ornamentation to or through the skin" — and the AR 670-1 definition of "skin" includes "the tongue, lips, inside the mouth and other surfaces of the body not readily visible."

Glasses

Last but not least, how about the fashion statement you make with eyeglasses and sunglasses? When you're in uniform, make sure you're making the right statement, and not "talking (fashion) trash." Soldiers are not authorized to wear glasses that are considered trendy, such as those with initials, designs or other adornments on the lenses or frames. Sunglass lens colors should be on the conservative side, in gray, brown or dark green. Because eyewear is not authorized for wear on top of your head, the big fashion question for sunglasses is, "Where do I put them when I'm not wearing them?" The short answer is: Know where not to put them. Don't hang them off your uniform, and don't hang them from chains, bands or ribbons down the front of the uniform.

These tips take only seconds to apply, which is generally far less time-consuming — or painful — than being the subject of a long and loud on-the-spot correction. You'll know you've achieved "the look" when you are dressed exactly the same as every other Soldier in your unit. Apply these simple guidelines and you're guaranteed to be the height of ACU fashion this season!

Was denkst du?

(What do you think?)

Chris Criss
Family member
USAG Grafenwoehr

"Work towards getting a 3.0 GPA in college. No."

Daniel Fonseca
Family member
USAG Grafenwoehr

"Get a job and then a car. I just started looking for a job."

Kyle Lund
Family member
USAG Grafenwoehr

"To make a resolution is my resolution, so, no, I haven't broken it."

Ariel Strausbaug
Family member
USAG Grafenwoehr

"I hate New Year's resolutions. I never make it past 12:01."

Kat Watson
DoD employee
USAG Grafenwoehr

"To do at least one thing for someone else and feel the rewards. I've already kept my resolution."

What is your New Year's resolution? Have you broken it yet?

2011

Garrison tax centers open doors Feb. 1

The first in a three-part series on preparing for the 2010 tax season

by JMTC Office of the Staff Judge Advocate
News Release

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — The 7A JMTC tax filing season begins on Feb. 1 and will run through the overseas filing deadline of June 15. Last tax season the 7A JMTC tax centers assisted 12,874 tax filers at no charge, saving them almost \$2 million in preparation and filing fees, and generating more than \$22.4 million in direct deposit refunds. This season our tax center professionals are prepared to meet and exceed those staggering statistics.

Most returns can be prepared quickly and accurately with a little advanced preparation. First, Soldiers, civilian employees and retirees can download wage and tax statements, Form W-2, from the Defense Finance and Accounting Service at www.dfas.mil. Most banks and investment companies will mail statements of interest and dividends, Form 1099, by the end of January. In addition to all W-2 and 1099 forms, filers need a social security number for each family member, and routing and account numbers from your bank for refunds.

In order to claim a child on a tax return, the child needs a Social Security Number (SSN). Overseas, this should be done in conjunction with the birth registration process through the passport office, or by calling the Federal Benefits Unit at the U.S. Consulate in Frankfurt, 069-7535-2440. Although taxpayers may file their taxes before the SSN is assigned, they may not claim that child on the tax return. Af-

ter the number is assigned they may amend the return, but that is double work for the filer, the preparers and the IRS. Plus, the government holds on to more of the taxpayer's money until the return is amended and the proper refund is calculated.

Taxpayers with complicated returns should take extra time to ensure that their documents are in order and should always have a copy of their prior year tax return available for their tax preparer. A tax return is complicated when it includes capital gains, rental real estate income or loss, foreign earned income or foreign taxes paid, or multiple state income tax returns.

Taxpayers are required to report all income from sources to include those from outside the United States. This is true whether you reside in or outside the U.S., and whether or not you receive a Form W-2 or 1099 from the foreign payer. This applies to earned income (salary, wages, tips) and to unearned income (interest, dividends, capital gains, pensions, rents and royalties). However, up to \$91,500 of foreign earned income may be excludable income subject to U.S. taxation.

Those deploying or otherwise unavailable during the tax season, who would like their spouse to file a return in their absence, may fill out an IRS Form 2848, which can be downloaded from www.irs.gov. The form does not require notarization. Absent filers may also prepare a power of attorney that specifically states that the person is authorized to file taxes on their behalf. Powers of attorney do require notarization.

For more information, visit your local tax center or check out the U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/USAGG.



Photo by Jeremy S. Buddemeier

Tracy Cooklin, a tax preparer at Grafenwoehr's Main Post, assists a Soldier with his tax return. Customers are reminded to bring necessary documentation, including W-2 and related forms, to their tax preparation appointment. See the frequently asked questions below for more information.

Kindergeld is not taxable income

by JMTC Office of the Staff Judge Advocate
News Release

One misperception held by some members of the military community is that Kindergeld paid by the German government is subject to income tax in the United States. In fact, Kindergeld is not considered taxable U.S. income. This is because the IRS considers Kindergeld, which acts as a reduction to German tax liability, to be a German tax benefit rather than an item of income that must be reported for U.S. federal income tax purposes.

Taxpayers who have reported Kindergeld in past income tax returns may file amended returns to obtain possible refunds. Normally, taxpayers have three years from the original due date of the return in which to file these types of amendments.

The 7th Army JMTC legal offices in Bavaria will open its tax centers and begin e-filing tax returns Feb. 1. Until then, taxpayers may contact their local legal assistance office or visit JMTC's tax website at: [www.hqjmtc.army.mil/Organization/Special Personal Staff/Staff_SJA/Staff_SJA_TaxOffice.html](http://www.hqjmtc.army.mil/Organization/Special%20Personal%20Staff/Staff_SJA/Staff_SJA_TaxOffice.html).

Frequently asked questions for tax season 2010

Q. What are the major tax law changes for 2010?

A. Just to name a few:

- This year's deadline for filing tax returns is extended to April 18.
- Taxpayers who itemize deductions on Form 1040 Schedule A, taxpayers claiming the Higher Education Tuition and Fees deduction, and taxpayers claim the Educator Expense deduction need to wait until mid- to late February to file their tax returns to give the IRS time to reprogram its processing systems.
- Due to tax law changes for 2010 taxes, more people may benefit from filing Form 1040A or 1040, even if you normally file Form 1040EZ.

Q. What should I bring with me to the community tax center to get my taxes done?

A. At a minimum, all taxpayers must bring their DoD-issued ID card and official documentation of Social Security number, all W-2 forms received from employers, and, if interested in electronic filing, a voided check.

Taxpayers must also bring appropriate documentation for relevant individual tax issues, such as:

- Form 1099 INT, DIV (interest statements)
- Original power of attorney, if filing for a spouse (see #3 below)
- Documentation of child care expenses paid last year
- Documentation of Individual Retirement Arrangements (IRAs)
- Documentation supporting charitable contributions
- Statement of interest expenses (mortgage, student loans)
- Alimony information

(copy of divorce or separation agreement)

- Other relevant financial information from the tax year (e.g. investment statements, rental reports, medical expenses, charitable contributions, etc.)

Q. What do I do if my spouse is not available to sign the tax return?

A. If you are married and filing a joint return but your spouse is unavailable to sign the return, you need to get a power of attorney, which explicitly grants authority for tax filing. This power of attorney must have the notarized signature of your spouse. IRS Form 2848 is not sufficient if the spouse's signature is not notarized. If your spouse is deployed, the IRS grants an extension of 180 days from the spouse's return from deployment to file taxes.

For more information on deployed spouses and extensions on filing deadlines, consult your community tax center.

Q. My spouse works on the local economy and pays taxes to the host nation. Do I need to report my spouse's income on our return?

A. If your spouse is a U.S. citizen or resident and you are filing a joint return, you will need to report your spouse's income on your tax return. If you are filing separately, she would only need to file if she earned more than \$3,650. If she must file, you then may be able to exclude up to \$91,400 of that income from your taxable income under the Foreign Earned Income Exclusion.

If your spouse is not a U.S. citizen or resident, she does not need to report her

income. It may be to your advantage, however, to elect to treat your spouse as a U.S. resident so you can file a joint return. Consult your tax center for an individualized discussion of these issues.

Q. Does the Foreign Earned Income Exclusion apply to service members and employees of the U.S. government stationed in Europe?

A. No, that exclusion does not apply to U.S. service members and other employees of the U.S. government. They must pay U.S. income tax, even if stationed overseas.

Q. Do I need to pay state income tax if I live in Europe?

A. States can require their residents and/or domiciliaries to pay income tax. A state has the authority to tax domiciliaries of that state, even if the domiciliary does not currently live in that state any longer due to military assignment. Each state's law is different, so to be sure you are complying with applicable state law, stop by your community tax center and inquire about the rules for your state of domicile.

Q. What is my state of residence for income tax purposes?

A. Your state of residence for income tax purposes is controlled by your physical presence in that state and/or your intent to return there and remain indefinitely. Generally, military personnel are only required to file if required to by the state where their home of record is located. Until this year, all other taxpayers had to obey the filing requirements

of their domicile. In November 2009, President Obama signed the Military Spouses Residency Relief Act into law. This act allows the spouse of a service member to keep or regain as his domicile the domicile of his service member spouse so long as he has sufficient indicia that the state kept or regained is the his current domicile. Indicia of domicile include owning real property in that state, voting in that state, owning personal property located in that state, registering vehicles in that state, maintaining accounts at a bank located in that state, etc. For assistance in determining your state of residence for income tax purposes, contact your community tax center.

Q. What services are available at the community tax centers?

A. Community tax centers will e-file taxes for eligible community members. The tax centers are also a resource for people who prepare their own taxes. E-filers and legal assistance attorneys can provide personal income tax advice, publications and other reference materials, and review prepared returns.

Community tax centers are staffed by personnel trained and certified under the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program. The personnel are supervised by a legal assistance attorney and paralegal.

Q. What resources are available people who want to prepare their own tax returns?

A. The IRS offers taxpayers free help on federal tax questions and with filing a return. Assistance is available at any time on the IRS

website: www.irs.gov. Help is also available by telephone and in person.

A few publications that are especially useful for USA-REUR community members:

- Publication 17, "Your Federal Income Tax"
- Publication 3, "Armed Forces' Guide"
- Publication 54, "Tax Guide for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad"

If you require additional assistance, contact your community tax center. In addition to assisting community members with filing taxes, community tax centers can assist eligible community members with tax advice and understanding the tax code. A full list of tax centers across U.S. Army Europe is available at www.hqusareur.army.mil/taxes.

Q. If a retiree lives in a foreign country, can the retiree and their spouse's Social Security be exempt?

A. No. U.S.-source income is never exempt from taxation simply because it is earned by someone living in a foreign country.

Q. Why do I need to fill out the same paperwork (Tax Preparation Info Sheet, Taxpayer Info Sheet, Intake/Quality Review Sheet) at my tax center every year if my info has not changed?

A. Your community tax center needs the intake sheet filled out each year to ensure the accuracy of your tax return. Tax law changes every year, and you may not be aware of all the changes. The forms we use will assist us in determining the tax you owe and the refund you may receive.

Tax centers in Bavaria

Ansbach/Katterbach
Katterbach Kaserne
Bldg. 5817, 3rd floor
DSN 467-2324
CIV 09802-83-2324
Mon-Fri, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Thu, 9 a.m.-7 p.m.
walk-ins and scheduled appointments

Ansbach/Illesheim
Stork Barracks
Bldg. 6506 (Law Center)
DSN 467-4511
CIV 09841-83-4511
Mon-Fri, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
walk-ins and scheduled appointments

Bamberg
Warner Barracks
Bldg. 7000, 4th floor
DSN 469-8261/8262
CIV 0951-300-8261/8262
Mon-Fri, 9 a.m.-noon,
1-4 p.m. walk-ins and scheduled appointments
Sat (Feb. only) 9 a.m.-noon
by appointment only

Garmisch
Artillery Kaserne
Bldg. 203
DSN 440-3516
CIV 088217-50-3516
Mon-Fri, 8 a.m.-noon,
by appointment only

Grafenwoehr
Main Post, Bldg. 216
DSN 475-9258
CIV 09641-83-9258
Tue through Fri,
9 a.m.-5 p.m.,
Mon, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
walk-ins and appointments

Hohenfels
Bldg. 313
DSN 466-2836
CIV 09472-83-2836
Mon, Wed and Fri,
9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Tue and Thu, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.,
1st Sat of month
9 a.m.-noon
by appointment only

Schweinfurt
Conn Barracks, Bldg. 1
DSN 353-8286
CIV 09721-96-8286
Mon-Fri, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
walk-ins and scheduled appointments

Vilseck
Rose Barracks
Bldg. 245, 1st floor
DSN 476-2714
CIV 09662-83-2714
Mon-Fri, 9 a.m.-noon,
and 1-5 p.m. walk-ins and scheduled appointments



Visit our official U.S. Army Grafenwoehr Facebook page at www.facebook.com/USAGG

Aircrews recognized for valor in combat

Story and photo by

Sgt. 1st Class

Christopher DeHart

*12th Combat Aviation
Brigade Public Affairs*

KATTERBACH, Germany — Seven Soldiers with C Company, 5-158th Aviation Regiment, 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, received the Silver Star or Distinguished Flying Cross from Brig. Gen. Allen W. Batschelet, V Corps acting commanding general, last month at Katterbach Army Airfield in a ceremony honoring the aircrews for their acts of valor in support of the German Bundeswehr this past April.

Capt. Robert McDonough, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jason LaCrosse, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Nelson Visaya, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jason Brown, Staff Sgt. Travis Brown, Sgt. Antonio Gattis and Sgt. Steven Schumaker are also recipients of the German Gold Cross medal, the highest award given by the Bundeswehr for a single act of valor performed in the heat of battle in Kunduz Province, Afghanistan, April 2, 2010.

"It means a lot to us, it really does ... to be recognized by both the German government and the American government for our actions that day," LaCrosse said. "It speaks highly of both nations to recognize Soldiers for acts of heroism, though we don't look at it that way. We look at it as we were doing our job."

“The biggest reward we ever got (was when the German soldiers) came by after the engagement, gave us a hug, shook our hands and there was an instant bonding, like a brotherhood. There is no award that can make up for that one.”

Staff Sgt. Travis Brown

C Company, 5-158th Aviation Regiment

LaCrosse, the sole recipient of the Silver Star, gave a stirring speech on behalf of his fellow aviators and his brothers-in-arms from the Bundeswehr unit they were responsible for helping save that fateful day, several of whom were in attendance at the ceremony.

The memories shared by both the American and German soldiers will likely be remembered for the rest of their lives, and the emotions and sentiments were echoed by others in the group.

"We are extremely honored and humbled by the experience. We were just doing our ordinary duty, but everyone else thinks otherwise. Still, it is very humbling to accept this award," Visaya said.

Also in attendance for this auspicious event was Staatssekretär Christian Schmidt, the state secre-

tary of the Ministry of Defense of the Federal Republic of Germany, along with a host of both German provincial and military representatives.

Before participating in the actual presentation of the awards, Schmidt talked in detail about the importance of working together toward common goals, not just between America and Germany, but among all nations involved in such efforts as the support of the Afghan people.

However, he stressed that one point was remembered in particular, and that was of the closeness of the partnership and relationship between Germany and the U.S. military both here and abroad.

The Ehrenkreuz der Bundeswehr in Gold was originally presented in Berlin, April 21, to Gen. Stanley McChrystal, then commander of the



Silver Star recipient Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jason LaCrosse (center), a pilot with C Company, 5-158th Aviation Regiment, 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, is congratulated by Staatssekretär Christian Schmidt, the state secretary at the Ministry of Defense for Germany, and Brig. Gen. Allen Batschelet, V Corps acting commanding general, during an awards ceremony at Katterbach Army Airfield, Dec. 13.

International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, by Dr. Karl-Theodor Freiherr zu Guttenberg, Minister of Defense of the Federal Republic of Germany, to later present award to the 14 aviators.

"The biggest reward we ever got, at the end of the day, the guys (German soldiers) came by after they

came back from their engagement, gave us a hug, shook our hands and there was an instant bonding, like a brotherhood," Staff Sgt. Brown said of how events wound down at the end of the day April 2. "That was the greatest gift that we got. We still maintain that. There is no award that can make up for that one."



Michael Myers, a fork lift operator at the receiving area of the Vilseck Supply Support Activity, moves a pallet while getting it ready for a shipment, Dec. 15.

Civilians lead in SSA warehouse

Story and photo by

Spc. Robert E. Lynds

18th CSSB Public Affairs

VILSECK, Germany — In less than eight months from taking ownership, the civilians working in the Vilseck Supply Support Activity here completely reorganized the warehouse from the ground up.

With little experience working in an SSA, many of the Army civilians took on this job eager to learn.

"We can take these skills anywhere," said Nickeisha Christie, an SSA supply technician.

While most of the civilians are from the U.S., several are from Germany.

"It was hard trying to teach many of the Germans because they are not used to the Army way," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Edna Nieves of Penuelas, who works as the SSA's accountable officer.

Nieves opened an SSA in the Grafenwoehr Training Area in April, and later transferred to Vilseck to help set up the SSA there. The SSA in Vilseck belongs to the 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 16th Sustainment

Brigade.

The civilians and the Soldiers came together and completely rebuilt the SSA facility. Working without heat, they moved more than 600 pallets of inventory items and counted 1,556 lines of the authorized stockage list, all within four months.

On the first day of the 18th CSSB's ownership of the SSA, German fire marshals found large oil spills, which had the potential to shut down the opening of the warehouse. The SSA personnel had the spills cleaned up within a week.

Through working extra man hours and stock reorganization and distribution, the civilians of the SSA have saved more than \$2 million, to the benefit of the Vilseck footprint.

Even though Nieves is the only supply systems technician officer in the Grafenwoehr, Vilseck and Hohenfels area, she said she is happy to be working with such outstanding personnel.

The civilians were recognized during an appreciation dinner held by the 18th CSSB recently and were presented awards for their hard work and dedication.

Engineers step up to the plate in Kabul

Story and photo by

1st Lt. Michael Johnson

15th Engineer Battalion

KABUL, Afghanistan — Elements from the 902nd Engineer Company, 15th Engineer Battalion, arrived at the Kabul Base Cluster recently. Over the coming months, they will be finishing construction on new living areas to support a redistribution of forces within this area of operations. The forward deployed construction force includes a main component of the 902nd, with several supporting attachments from the battalion staff and forward support company.

The mission is a landmark in battalion history. This will be one of its first construction missions conducted in a combat theater since 1969, when the battalion participated in eight major operations and received three prestigious awards from the Republic of Vietnam.

For Spc. Karlos Contreras, a medic attached to the 902nd Company, this is his first deployment to the Middle East.

"I was surprised," he said. "From everything you hear about Afghanistan, I wasn't expecting the U.S. footprint to be this well-developed. I was expecting dirt roads, battle-scarred T-walls. It's pretty different than what you hear, at least in Kabul."

The project started under the 367th Engineer Battalion several months ago. Difficulties with the construction materials have halted progress several times already, and it seems to be a problem inherent with working in a developing nation.

Sgt. 1st Class Carpenter, the battalion construction operations NCO in charge, said that one of the main problems is inconsistency with the flow of supplies. For example, 20 plumbing fixtures ordered simultaneously might arrive in two shipments of 10 over three weeks apart.

There are prominent challenges outside of construction as well. Staff Sgt. DeLarosa, the acting platoon sergeant,



Soldiers from the 902nd Engineer Company, 15th Engineer Company, complete wiring on the exterior of a pre-engineered building in Kabul.

cited his concerns about maintaining physical fitness while acclimating to Kabul's combination of thin air and heavy smog.

Since the battalion's reactivation in July 2008, Soldiers have put thousands of training hours into honing their skills and learning their craft.

"This is finally a chance to really use what we've been practicing," said Sgt. 1st Class Roland Tajalle, platoon sergeant. "Our past missions supported other Army agencies, but with this one, you really feel like you're helping the fight directly."

"It's a big project," said 1st Lt. Brent Johnson, the battalion's forward construction officer. "Being on the ground here, and seeing the current conditions, you can really see that you're doing a job these guys need done, and that nobody else can do. It's what being an engineer is all about."

The mission is complex. Construction will involve erecting several pre-engineered buildings with extensive dry walling, welding, window installation, roofing and more. After the main buildings are up, they will need to be outfitted with infrastructure like running water, electricity and communication lines.

Spc. Antonio Jones, a plumber working with 1st Platoon, reiterated the problem with construction supplies.

"The only real challenge is not having the entire bill of materials. At times, small leaks can become a challenge if you fix one, and another pops up, because you might have only allocated enough resources to fix the first one."

Spc. Jason Jeter, an electrician with 3rd Platoon, elaborated.

"When it comes to electrical, having the right materials is a must — especially when it comes to bathrooms, since they're required to have certain waterproof items."

Despite the challenges, he expressed his excitement in working on the project.

"This is the first official electric project my platoon has done. Our four week AIT course gave us a good foundation, but we have a lot to learn in areas like bending conduit, troubleshooting, and advance wiring. This project has allowed every Soldier to learn and combine past knowledge to complete the mission."

In addition to the primary operation, several side missions are being conducted simultaneously for the low density skill sets. The 534th

Survey and Design Detachment has been taking full advantage of the situation.

"One thing our section was really lacking experience with was the design software," said Sgt. 1st Class Erich Stemmerding, NCOIC of the 534th. "So we started working with the camp's Directorate of Public Works on whatever drawings or quick surveys they need done, to make sure we provide this base cluster the maximum possible support. They haven't seen troop construction capabilities in a long time."

First Lt. Jerome Jose, the battalion's forward communications officer, also plans to use his time wisely.

"Of course, from a communications perspective, you're going to have a lot of the same problems and work that you have in the rear. But with a smaller element, I'm getting some more down time, so I've started working with the base camp's Information and Telecommunications Office to learn my way around the network better. I think it'll really be useful to work at the bigger picture level for a while."

Jose was sent forward to ensure that 902nd Company and supporting elements had effective communications immediately upon arrival.

Troopers remember fallen friend

Story and photos by
Sgt. 1st Class John Wollaston
2SCR Public Affairs

COALITION OPERATING BASE, Afghanistan — “Amazing Grace,” taps and three round volleys filled the dusty air of this forward operating base in Uruzgan Province as troopers from 1st Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment gathered yet again to pay tribute to one of their fallen comrades, Staff Sgt. Eric Nettleton.

The Wichita, Kansas, native was killed by an improvised explosive device not far from where his fellow Soldiers now stood to honor him with a memorial service. His platoon was escorting an Explosives Ordnance Disposal team to an Afghan National Police checkpoint where an IED had been located the day prior. The convoy stopped to clear an area around a culvert, a common place for insurgents to hide IEDs, when he stepped on the device that killed him.

“It’s always hard to lose a friend, even harder to lose a brother in arms,” said Pfc. Casey Surprenant, a member of Nettleton’s squad. “Staff Sgt. Nettleton was both. He took me under his wing and taught me everything.”

Remembered by friends and team members alike as a professional with a great personality, a knack for applying movie quotes to just about any situation and a great sense of humor. Third platoon leader 1st Lt. Alexander Triplett recalled one time when that sense of humor came into play, providing some levity to the search



A Soldier adds his name tape to the pile on a memorial for Staff Sgt. Eric Nettleton. Nettleton, a fire team leader with Bull Company, 1st Squadron 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, was killed by an improvised explosive device while on patrol in Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan. Soldiers left name tapes, unit patches and coins as mementos to their fallen comrade which will be given to the family.

for a lost piece of equipment.

“He walked up to me and said ‘Hey sir, what’s the problem?’” Triplett recalled. “I told him and he said ‘no worries sir, it’s somewhere,’ smiled and walked off. That joke and his positive attitude is what I will always remember about him. He calmed me down and eventually we found what we were looking for.”



Col. James Blackburn (left) and Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Morris, the regimental commander and command sergeant major for the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, pay their final respects to Staff Sgt. Eric Nettleton, who was killed by an improvised explosive device.

Drawing on the words found in the New Testament’s John 15:13, which reads, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends,” 1st Squadron Commander Lt. Col. Douglas Sims used the passage to describe the selfless sacrifice Nettleton displayed that fateful day.

“While the rest of the platoon waited for the signal for safe passage, Staff Sgt. Nettleton dismounted and moved forward without hesitation,” Sims said. “Over the past several days I’ve been moved by the genuine love the Soldiers, NCOs and officers felt for him. He was a man of great talent,

a man who led from the front and did so with a sincere and utter concern for the Soldiers in his charge.”

Posthumously promoted to staff sergeant, awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart, Nettleton is survived by his parents, James and Sandy, and his wife Ashley.

2SCR Dragoon brings Soldiers ‘closer to home’

Story and photo by
Sgt. Jerry Wilson
2SCR Public Affairs

ZABUL, Afghanistan — The Dragoons of the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment spent the holidays in a foreign land instead of with family and friends. Though they weren’t home this year, they received a little Christmas cheer courtesy of the Chaplain Corps and a variety of nonprofit organizations dedicated to providing Soldiers with care packages from home.

One such program is Operation Close to Home. Close to Home was started by one of 2SCR’s own troopers, Spc. Karl Van Burkleo and his wife Regina. Van Burkleo, a chaplain’s assistant with FIRES Squadron, is currently deployed to the Zabul Province of Afghanistan. Working as part of the Unit Ministry Team, Van Burkleo noticed that simple things like body wash, toothpaste or candy could be a big morale booster to those Dragoons who were miles away from the nearest exchange or store.

“Operation Close to Home was an organization my wife and I started to get things such as toiletries and goodies to the guys in 2SCR,” Van Burkleo said. “If I am not able to supply the requests of the Soldiers through the many other charitable organizations out there, I can get in touch with my wife and get whatever it is from her.”

“Our goal with this program is to bring a little bit of home to the brave men and women you proudly serve in the U.S. and UK military. Hopefully, making their time out there a little more comfortable,” said Regina.

To implement their new program, Regina turned to what has slowly become a Soldier’s best friend for staying in contact with their loved



Spc. Karl Van Burkleo distributes some toiletries to a Soldier. The items were donated through the Operation Close to Home program.

ones, Facebook.

For Regina, the decision to establish OCH on Facebook was a simple one.

“To be perfectly honest,” she said, “I chose it because I know how to use it and most of my family and friends are already on it. I can keep them up to date with the program.”

Regina has also found it to be a great way to gain new recruits to the cause.

“Anyone who is on Facebook can easily refer their friends or family members to the site,” she said. “I want to get as many people involved as possible.”

Regina and Karl have already developed quite a base-line of supporters to include Enterprise Rent-A-Car UK, where Regina works as a human resource manager. Several schools have also begun collecting items for the Dragoons, including Barrow Primary School in England, as well as Holmquist Elementary School in Houston, Texas. The American Legion Post in Sanderson, Texas, has also contributed greatly to OCH.

One supporter holds a special place in the Van Burkleo’s hearts.

“The parents of an Eagle Scout Troop in Texas contacted the site,” Regina recalled. They exchanged a few emails and they became friends. Regina and Karl visited the family while in Houston on rest and recuperation leave and a special bond was born.

“Now they are helping their son collect items for his Eagle Scout project,” Regina said.

Regina said she is kind of surprised that OCH doesn’t take up much of her time at all.

“Most of my time is spent marketing it,” she said, “making appointments to talk to people and then collecting things.” She also admits her job is made a lot easier because many supporters ship their donations straight to Karl themselves.

Anyone interested in becoming part of Operation Close to Home is urged to visit their site at: www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=141118052581200.

Donations can also be sent directly to the Soldiers at the following address:

Unit Ministry Team C/O
Spc. Van Burkleo, Karl G.
FIRES SQDN HHB 2SCR
FOB Lagman/Qalat,
APO AE 09383

First Afghan females graduate from police training center

by **Sgt. Jerry Wilson**
2SCR Public Affairs

ZABUL, Afghanistan — Troopers from the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment working alongside their Afghan National Police partners at the Police Training Center in Qalat started the New Year right, Jan. 3, by graduating a class of 134 new recruits. Class 1101 had the distinction of not only being the first class of 2011, but also the first class to include volunteers from the Commerce Stability Program and five female recruits.

Dragoons conduct a six-week training course for new ANP recruits. Students are taught techniques and law enforcement skills that will help them in their mission to provide security and stability to the citizens of Zabul Province. The training is separated into classroom and hands-on exercises. Instructors teach basic skills like weapons handling, weapons maintenance and first aid. In addition, recruits are taught room clearing, traffic control point operations and team leading procedures.

This class was the first to include volunteers from the newly established Commerce Stability Program. The CSP is a village-level security program similar to neighborhood watch. The program hires men from each village and pays them to man observation posts alongside ANP officers. In addition to the CSP, class 1101



Photo by Capt. Vinh Bui

Female Afghan National Police recruits familiarize themselves with their rifles during weapons training, a part of the basic police training taught at the Police Training Center in Qalat, Afghanistan.

also included the first female candidates to be inducted within the Zabul Province.

Five courageous women stepped up and despite fear of retribution toward their families and vowed to support and defend their homes. Due to the predominately male environment at the PTC and the lack of the women instructors, female recruits were unable to engage in many of the practical exercises with the men. To compensate for this, female recruits were given a more extensive overview of procedures during their classroom training.

“They went through the basic classroom training such as first aid, the constitution,

tactics and techniques, check-point operations and security operations,” said Capt. Vinh Bui, the Provincial Logistical Advisor for PTC. “They also went to the range and qualified with both rifle and pistol.”

“The intent is for them to have a basic understanding as police officers,” Bui explained, “what they need to know, in order to influence the locals as well as be effective members of the force.”

Bui said graduating these women is a progressive step but they will face many restrictions due to the current cultural standards.

“Because they are female,” Bui said, “there will always be a fear of retribution towards their families so they will always be covered up.”

Bui said wearing the full traditional burka, female officers will not be as intimidating as their male counterparts wearing their body armor and weapons.

Bui did state that though they will face many challenges in their careers, these five officers have contributed to making Afghanistan a more stable and secure country.

“They give females a voice within the ANP,” Bui said. “They make it more diverse and well-rounded. This is the first step in the right direction. With a little more time and cultural adjustment we can make the female presence more acceptable within society here.”

News is addictive. If you need more, subscribe to USAG Grafenwoehr’s daily newsletter.

E-mail usaggnews@eur.army.mil to get your daily news fix.

Elementary students know the world



Fourth- and fifth-graders show certificates they earned in Netzbarg Elementary's 2nd Annual Geography Bee.



Photos by Kristie Mashburn

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — The tension was palpable as each of the 18 fourth- and fifth-grade Geography Bee contestants stepped up to the microphone. The 2nd Annual Netzbarg Elementary School Geography Bee showcased these students' knowledge on the five themes of geography (location, place, human-envi-

ronment interaction, movement and region).

The competition lasted seven long rounds. The winning question was about the country where the majority of the population in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador is of British or Irish decent.

Autumn Cheung (left), a fifth-grader from Mr. Simm's

class, amazed the audience with the correct answer: Canada. In addition to winning a savings bond and a class pizza party from the school's PTSA, Autumn will take a written test with the hope of being one of the top 100 scorers from DODEA who will eligible to compete in the next level of the National Geographic Bee in April.



Energy tips

- Unplug appliances when not in use. Items plugged in continue to use electricity even if they're not in use.
- Computer monitors use 60 watts of power per hour, monitors should be turned off if individual is expected to be gone for more than 10 minutes.
- Follow your garrison computer shut-off policy and turn off your government computer at the end of the day (except Tuesdays for security scan/update).

What's Happening

Ansbach Briefs

Stolen govt. property

The Ansbach CID Office is seeking information leading to the identification, arrest and conviction of the persons responsible for the theft of government property between Nov. 9-10, 2010.

The following Government Property was taken: M22 Binoculars, PEQ-15 laser pointer, M68 holographic sights for the M16A1 or M4, Anti-Reflection Device (lens cover for the M22 Binoculars), Black Lens caps (replacement lens), Black battery cover for the M14 telescope, Anti-Reflection Device (lens cover for the M24 Telescopic sight), M150 ACOG (optical gun sight) from the 412th ASB Motor Pool, Ship-ton Kaserne, APO AE 09075.

Any person having information regarding this incident should contact the Ansbach CID Office at 0162-270-4044 / 467-3506 or the Ansbach military police at 0981-183-637/468-7637. Your name can remain confidential.

The payout of cash rewards to military and federal employees for information leading to a conviction is contingent upon their exceptional actions regarding the information provided.

Garmisch Briefs

What's happening?

For the latest news on current events like fests, concerts, parties, parades and more in Garmisch-Partenkirchen and Southern Bavaria, to post your own local news, or see the latest photo of the Zugspitze, visit the USAG Garmisch Facebook page. Updated daily, always relevant and fresh as a morning brezel.

Unless noted, all FMWR events meet at the Pete Burke Center. To register for the events contact the staff at the Pete Burke Community Center, DSN 440-2638, CIV 08821-750-2638, or email us at Garmisch.FMWR.odr@us.army.mil.

Concerts/Operas

Jan. 19: "The Tragedy of the Devil" Tickets range from 10 to 132 euros. The Pete Burke Community Center provides transportation to and from the concert/opera venue for those attending or who just want to spend the evening in Munich. Cost \$12.

Water Works!

Jan. 22: Enjoy an extremely therapeutic, relaxing, calming, and exhilarating time, with lots of good fun at the Erdinger Therme water park. Cost: Transportation \$15; park entry cost varies.

Ski, board & bob races

Jan. 23: This is the Garmisch Annual Ski, Board and Bob Races event for those who love winter sports. There is something for all ages and abilities. Anyone can enter the ski/snowboard race. The mini-bob sled race is a huge hit with racers and spectators. Entry fee: \$20 per person, \$45 per family.

Neuschwanstein Castle

Jan. 23: Visit the most popular tourist attraction in Germany. This tour, called "Ludwig and Richard," focuses as much on the famous composer as well as the shy king. In addition, we visit the Ettal Monastery and the Wieskirche; a UNESCO designated World Heritage Site. Cost: \$39

Night Sledding

Jan. 25: Imagine a completely groomed and lighted ski run just for sleds, with a cable car to get you back up, all night long! Cost: \$39 adult, \$29 child includes transportation, mini-bob, and lift pass.

Venice/Verona

Jan. 28-30: See the great art and architecture, pigeons in St. Mark's Square, and gondolas on the Grand Canal. Enjoy good places to eat! We visit Verona, the Romeo and Juliet city with the great Roman Arena. Cost: \$290

Ski Austria

Jan. 29: A hidden gem in the Austrian Alps, Berwang-Bichlbach, is our only "Ski in-Ski out" Brewery of the month where we visit the tiny brewpub at Rinnen. Cost: \$69 adult, \$59 child, includes transportation, and lift pass, \$79 includes weekend equipment rental, \$12 for just the bus ride, (space available).

ACS Classes/gatherings Love and Logic

• Wednesdays from Jan. 19 - Feb. 23, noon - 1 p.m.: Love and Logic - Early Childhood Parenting Made Fun for families with children up to 6 years of age

Mondays

• M.o.M's Group (Move on Monday): 10:15-11:45 a.m.
• Money Mondays: 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. the second Mon. of the month
• Gruess Gott Garmisch Group

meets at 9:30 a.m. the first Monday of the month at the Pete Burke Center.

Tuesday

• Playgroup: 10-11:30 a.m. at the Garmisch Chapel
• Conversational German: 9:30-11 a.m.

Wednesday

• Working Wednesdays: 1-2:30 p.m. first Wednesday of the month

Thursday

• Newcomers Community Services Briefing 8:30-11:30 a.m. the second Thursday of the month
• Stress and Anger Management Class every second Thursday from noon to 1 p.m.

Unless noted all ACS activities take place or meet at the Garmisch ACS Center (Artillery Kaserne, Bldg 203). For more information contact your ACS staff at DSN 440-3777, Civ. 08821-750-3777, or email them at Garmisch.FMWRacs@eur.army.mil.

Graf/Rose Barracks Briefs

Estate claims

• For claims on or obligations to the estate of Sgt. Eric Nettleton of 1st Squadron, 2SCR, Spc. Kelly Mixon of 3rd Squadron, 2d SCR, Sgt. James Ayube of 3rd Squadron, 2SCR, Pfc. Conrado Javier of 3rd Squadron, 2SCR, contact the following summary court martial officer: Capt. Chris Haag at DSN: 476-5897 or e-mail: chris.haag@us.army.mil
• For claims or obligations to the estate of Sgt. David S. Robinson of Delta Company, 2nd Squadron, 2SCR, contact the following summary court martial officer: 2nd Lt. Cameron Rick at DSN: 475-8230 or e-mail: cameron.rick@eur.army.mil.
• For claims or obligations to the estate of SPC Joseph Prentler of 3rd Squadron, 2SCR or Pfc. Cody Board of 1st Squadron, 2SCR, contact the following summary court martial officer: Maj. Ruben Irizarry at DSN: 475-2266 or e-mail ruben.irizarryguzman@eur.army.mil.
• For claims or obligations to the estate of SPC Joseph Prentler of 3rd Squadron, 2SCR or Pfc. Cody Board of 1st Squadron, 2SCR, contact the following summary court martial officer: Maj. Ruben Irizarry at DSN: 475-2266 or e-mail ruben.irizarryguzman@eur.army.mil.
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• For claims or obligations to the estate

Ansbach

Rich heritage, outdoor activities worth the trip



Ansbach sits in the rolling countryside of Middle Franconia, only an hour from Nuremberg, and less than an hour from the Franconian Lake District.



This clock tower, the Herrieder Tower, plays the song “Auf Ansbach Dragoner, auf Ansbach Bayreuth,” at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. daily.



Ansbach offers a modern shopping center, the Bruecken Center, with more than 70 stores.

Accessible to three kasernes, Ansbach provides history and home for Soldiers, families

Story and photos
by Gini Sinclair
USAG Ansbach Public Affairs

The city of Ansbach is a community of more than 40,000 people in the Franconian region of Bavaria. Ansbach is home to the U.S. Army Garrison Ansbach, which also has installations in Katterbach, Oberdachstetten and Illesheim. A number of Americans call this area home, enjoying the rural surroundings mixed with the urban offerings of the city of Ansbach.

Founded around A.D. 700 Ansbach has served as home to members of a royal family. In 748, a Franconian nobleman, Gumbertus, founded a Benedictine monastery in the town. The monastery became a chapter house, a building attached to a cathedral where religious meeting are held. A town grew up around the chapter house, and in 1221 it was mentioned in official records.

Hohenzollern era

In the 14th century the Hohenzollern family took control of the city and for the next 500 years Ansbach was the permanent residence of the Franconian Hohenzollerns. In the 17th century Ansbach was a typical baroque residence. Then in 1806, Napoleon I gave the city of Ansbach to the Kingdom of Bavaria and the Hohenzollern era ended.

The historical center of Ansbach didn’t suffer much destruction during World War II and it has kept its baroque character. A tour of the downtown

area gives visitors a look at buildings dating from the 15th century to the modern era.

The Margraves’ Palace, across the street from Schlossplatz, has 27 rooms open to visitors. This palace served as home to the Margraves Brandenburg-Ansbach, a German rank of nobility equivalent to a British Marquess. Inside the palace is a two story festival hall, the Margraves’ audience room with a porcelain chandelier, and a tiled hall with about 2,800 tiles from the Ansbach Faience Manufacture.

The gardens of the Margrave’s Palace, Hofgarten, has an orangery built in 1728. The architect, Karl Friedrich of Zocha, built it to resemble the Gran Trianon of Versailles in France. This building is used today for classical concerts and conferences. The gardens are always open with free access.

Churches

St. Gumbertus Church, which dominates the skyline of Ansbach, was built in the 14th and 15th centuries with additions in the 16th century. The church served as the court church for the Margraves of Brandenburg-Ansbach, and today is the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Under the church is a Roman Crypt, which can be visited, that incorporates the remains of a stone church built on the site in 1040. The crypt contains 25 coffins of the Margraves and their family members.

St. Johannis Church was built during the 15th century and has three naves and several painted windows. Today it serves as a Protestant church for the community. Behind this church is a small section of the surviving town wall. This portion of the city wall dates from the 15th century and is part of the building complex that houses the Margraves’ Museum.

The Margraves’ Museum

is dedicated to the history of Ansbach and the surrounding area. The museum is open every day except Monday from October until April from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. From May until September the hours are the same, but the museum is open on Mondays.

The City Hall, built in 1623, has coats of arms over the doorway which shows the different affiliations of the town. Across the street, at an angle, is the Stadthaus, built in 1532, this building serves today as the place where the lord mayor and town council work. On the first floor of the Stadthaus is the tourist information office.

The base of the Herrieder Tower was built in the 15th century. The clock tower was built in 1750. In the tower is a carillon which plays the song “Auf Ansbach Dragoner, auf Ansbach Bayreuth,” at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Ansbach is home to one of the best preserved baroque synagogues of southern Germany. The synagogue was built in 1744 and can only be visited by taking part in the city tours conducted by the tourism office.

A guided tour on a handheld PDA can be obtained from the tourist office in Ansbach. The recorded version is available in English and will take visitors through 20 sights in the town. The route is designed to take one and a half hours. However, since the visitor rents the tour there is plenty of time to sit and relax, go shopping in the shops or enjoy the food in a local gasthaus. The audio is accompanied by over 300 photographs of the sights of Ansbach.

Further afield

The area surrounding Ansbach is rural with the Nature Park Frankenhoehe just north of the town. The park is 110,450 hectares of land stretching across Germany to



The former Chancellery was built in 1600 by Gideon Bacher. Later it was used for the scribes working for the Brandenburg-Ansbach Margraves. It is currently a German administrative court building.

Baden Wurttemberg. There are 200 kilometers of marking hiking trails that can be used by residents.

An indoor Olympic swimming pool offers water fun for those who can’t make the trip to the Franconian Lake District, less than one hour from Ansbach. The local golf club is actually located in the nearby town of Colmburg.

In the winter Ansbach is cold enough that local ponds turn into surfaces for ice skating. Four ponds maintained by the city, including Brick Pond, Meisel Pond, Beck Pond and Ice at the Carlsbad Street.

For those who prefer cross-country skiing the city has three trails where they can use snow machines when needed. The cross-country skiing trails include a trail in the forest Schoenfeld, which begins in Schalkhausen; the Dombachtal Trail that starts on Thomas Street in Ansbach, and Thiergarten Road in Henzenbach.

Only 35 kilometers from Nuremberg, Ansbach can be reached easily via autobahn A6 or state roads B14 or B13.

Warm-up key to injury prevention

by **Maj. Vancil McNulty**
*U.S. Army Public Health
Command (Provisional)*

Basketball is one of the most common recreational sports in the military. It is an excellent tool for fitness and fun that can break the monotony of a physical training program.

Basketball also happens to be a leading cause of sports-related injuries in the military. While lower extremities (ankles, knees and hips) are most commonly injured, there is a variety of upper extremity (shoulders, elbows and hands) and facial injuries (mouth, nose and eyes) that occur while playing basketball.

This article will briefly discuss two very common injuries and give some easy prevention techniques.

One of the most serious yet common injuries from basketball is a tear of the anterior cruciate ligament. The ACL is a vital ligament in the knee that helps keep the knee stable when a person bends at the knee, squats and jumps. The ACL can be torn or sprained when the player twists, jumps, lands, pivots or suddenly

stops. Women are at much greater risk than men for tearing the ACL.

Another very common site of injury is the ankle. Ankle ligament sprains and tears usually occur when the foot is "rolled" or twisted inward after an awkward landing, pivot or cut. It's usually the outer ligaments of the ankle that get injured.

Both knee ACL and ankle ligament tears can result in surgery and rehabilitation lasting six months to a year. It's to the recreational athlete's benefit, then, to practice some simple techniques that may prevent a good time on the court from becoming a major injury.

Warm-up

The warm-up cannot be over emphasized for any sport; it becomes even more important if one rarely plays basketball. The warm-up involves practicing the specific movements that are required in basketball but at a much slower and controlled pace. Take 10 to 15 minutes to practice techniques such as jumping, landing, cutting, pivoting and handling the ball. These activities prime the muscles and nervous system to keep movements precise and controlled,



Photo by Sandy Davis

Vilseck High School's Daniel Arroyo gets a jump on his German competitors, TB Neustadt, during a game at Vilseck, Dec. 16.

which will protect ligaments, tendons and joints. Stretching is not the same as a warm-up but can be a part of the warm-up.

Play at your skill level

Overconfidence in one's athletic abilities has been the down-

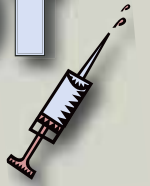
fall of many recreational basketball players. Don't get sloppy with technique or overexuberant with movements that you may not be accustomed to doing. The "I used to dunk" syndrome is one example. Be aware of the skill level of your opponent, who may be much better (or worse) than you.

Use ankle braces

Those with prior ankle sprains are especially vulnerable to a re-injury and should consider wearing an ankle brace while playing basketball. It is unknown how much preventive value an ankle brace provides an athlete who has never sprained an ankle, but the ankle brace may be beneficial for those who are inexperienced or underconfident in their basketball movement skills. A quality ankle brace can usually be attained from sick-call or a military medical treatment facility's physical therapy clinic at no charge. Wearing knee braces while playing basketball, however, does not have much preventive value for knee injuries.

Editor's Note: Maj. Vancil McNulty is a physical therapy staff officer for the U.S. Army Public Health Command (Provisional).

a shot of advice



by **Lt. Col. Stephen Linck**
BMEDDAC

Q. What is considered confidential during a behavioral health session? For example, if I knew someone in the military who was doing something illegal would that be reported to that person's chain of command?

I really don't want to get involved, but I also feel the need to vent.

Respectfully,
Isolated in Illesheim

A. Dear Isolated,
Almost everything in a behavioral health (BH) encounter is confidential. As a general rule, there is no duty for a BH provider to report knowledge of a crime such as vandalism, theft, etc. BH providers do have a duty to warn. This means that if a person poses a danger to themselves or others they have a duty to report the danger.

The BH provider will notify the threatened person, the military police and the individual's chain of command. The only people in the Army who can offer complete confidentiality are chaplains. Chaplains have a unique role and have no obligation to report under any circumstances.

You can always ask the BH provider during your session what they consider confidential. I hope this helps and you feel better after venting.

Q. Can I get sick from my dog? When I picked her up from the kennel it was obvious she had a cold. Twenty-four hours later I feel like I have flu-like symptoms starting. Is it possible I got the cold from my dog?

V/r, Sick as a dog in Schweinfurt

A. Dear Sick,
I think it is very unlikely that you got sick from your pet. Respiratory viruses are usually very specific to the type of animal. It is possible a virus can mutate from one animal to another as is the case with avian flu. Twenty-four hours is just the right time for you to manifest symptoms of a cold, which you probably came in contact with while you were traveling.

The real risk of getting sick from animals is related to fecal material. As long as you wash your hands when you are finished cleaning up after your pet there is little chance of getting sick from Spot or Fluffy.

Q. Is there something special I can do to get over jet lag quicker?

Thanks,
Exhausted in Eschenbach

A. Dear Exhausted,

I think at last count there are more than a million cures for jet lag, most of which don't work. Over time your body will adjust, but who wants to wait for nature? I have done a lot of reading on the subject because my wife drives me crazy when she is jet lagging.

One thing that seems to help the most is sunlight, but good luck finding some here in Germany during this time of the year. Exposure to sunlight helps your body adjust your circadian rhythms back to sleeping during the night.

Another trick that seems to work is to use caffeine. I prefer it in the form of coffee. How much to take depends on your average intake. Caffeine starts roughly 45 minutes after ingestion and the effects last for five to six hours.

The trick is to drink the coffee and go directly for a short nap, 45 minutes. Then you force yourself to get up and the coffee starts to affect you. When the caffeine wears off after five or six hours, you are ready to go to bed for the night. Good luck and enjoy your trip.

If you need a shot of advice, e-mail your question to Lt. Col. Stephen Linck at brmc-pao@amedd.army.mil.

Clinics respond to glucose test strip recall

Announcement may impact diabetics in U.S. military communities throughout Europe

by **Europe Regional Medical Command Public Affairs**
News Release

HEIDELBERG, Germany – Pharmacies at Army health facilities in Europe continue to manage stocks of glucose test strips and monitoring meters in the wake of a voluntary recall of diabetes care products.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced Dec. 22 that Abbott Diabetes Care had voluntarily recalled 359 different lots of glucose test strips manufactured between January and September 2010, prompting military and civilian pharmacies worldwide to order replacements.

The voluntary recall is related to the test strips' inability to absorb enough blood for monitoring, possibly resulting in a false low reading.

"The majority of glucose test strips dispensed at our pharmacies are the Abbott Precision Xtra product that may be subject to recall," said Lt. Col. Ronald Foley, Bavaria Medical Department Activity pharmacy chief. "Though not all of them may give incorrect blood glucose readings, some of them may be in affected lots subject to the recall."

Following the recall, the U.S. Army Medical Materiel Center Europe received and distributed 600 packages of Precision Xtra test strips to military health facilities in Europe.

As of Jan. 12, 209 replacement Abbott "Freestyle" test meter kits and 1044 boxes of glucose test strips for them are on hand. An additional 3,000-box order of Precision Xtra test strips is expected to arrive this week. Each box has 50 test strips.

Available supplies are being dispensed carefully so that patients' needs will be met. Depending on availability of unaffected Abbott Precision Xtra test strips, patients may receive either a full or a partial refill. If Abbott test strips are not available, a different kind of meter and test strips may be dispensed for new and refill prescriptions.

Medical officials advise diabetics who receive blood glucose test strips from U.S. military pharmacies in Europe to check their supplies.

Abbott Diabetes Care has offered to replace affected test strips free of charge. They can contact Abbott Diabetes Care at www.precisionoptiuminfo.com/ or U.S. phone number 800-448-5234 to determine if their test strips are among those recalled or to request replacement strips.

Diabetic patients in Europe may also call or visit their local U.S. military health clinic pharmacy if their glucose test strips are among those affected by the recall or to check on available supplies.

The FDA announcement at <http://tinyurl.com/2d3bmum> includes a link to questions and answers about the Abbott glucose test strip recall. The FDA's Q&A website is located at <http://tinyurl.com/29boym2>.

"We encourage diabetic patients to talk to their local military pharmacist if they have difficulty getting resupplied," said Col. Octavio Mont, pharmacy consultant for the Europe Regional Medical Command. "We will assist them as we all work through this problem together."

Guidelines for consumers continuing to use recalled strips

The Abbott website says if consumers must use affected test strips while in the process of obtaining new strips, they should:

- Check the amount of time it takes for the blood glucose meter to start the "countdown" after first applying blood to the test strip.
- Start timing immediately after blood first makes contact with the test strip. If the meter takes longer than five seconds to start the countdown, that test strip is affected and the results should not be used.
- Users should check the time for each test strip because all strips in a package may not be affected to the same degree. If any reading appears lower than expected or does not seem to correlate with the way they feel, user should contact their health care provider immediately.
- If patients do not immediately have access to unaffected strips and are unable to test their blood sugar, users need to be aware of symptoms of high blood sugar (hyperglycemia) and low blood sugar (hypoglycemia).
- Symptoms of high blood sugar include excessive thirst, excessive urination, blurred vision, weakness, nausea, vomiting, and abdominal pain. If a user is experiencing any of these symptoms or is not feeling well, they should contact their health care professional immediately.
- Symptoms of low blood sugar may include trembling, excessive sweating, weakness, hunger, confusion, and headache. Some individuals may have no symptoms at all before they develop unconsciousness or seizures. It is important to treat low blood sugars promptly to avoid loss of consciousness or a seizure. If a user is unable to obtain unaffected strips, they should contact their health care provider for advice on how to treat these symptoms before they occur.

Flu, Norovirus are more active this winter

by **BMEDDAC**
News Release

VILSECK, Germany — As the winter progresses, viruses such as Norovirus and influenza-like illnesses are becoming more active in the Bavarian footprint and medical officials are encouraging people to take action.

"Every year we run into the same viruses so this is not a reason to be alarmed," said Lt. Col. Gwendolyn Davis, Preventive Medicine chief. "Instead, we want people to focus on learning about the viruses and how to prevent them."

Most people are familiar with the influenza-type illnesses that cause symptoms like fever, coughing, a runny nose, sore throat and muscle aches. However, Norovirus is not as widely known.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Norovirus is a highly contagious stomach bug that can spread rapidly, especially in places like offices, schools and day care centers. Norovirus is also known as the stomach flu, viral gastroenteritis or food poisoning and can cause stomach and intestinal inflammation, diarrhea, vomiting and stomach pain.

People can start spreading the virus from the moment they start feeling ill to at least three days and possibly as long as two weeks after recovering, per the CDC.

The preventive measures for both Norovirus and influenza are the same, with one key difference.

"Currently, there is a vaccine available to help prevent influenza. If you haven't already gotten your seasonal flu vaccine, I highly rec-

ommend you visit your local health clinic and get immunized," Davis said. "However, at this time there is not a vaccine to prevent Norovirus. This makes practicing preventive measures even more important."

Consistently practicing preventive measures can help prevent both Norovirus and influenza-like illnesses, according to Davis. These measures include:

Covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you sneeze or cough. If a tissue is not available, then sneeze or cough into your sleeve or elbow - not your hand.

Practicing proper hand hygiene. Wash hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer or gel.

Trying to avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth as germs spread this way.

Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.

If you or your child gets sick with a flu-like illness, limit contact with others as much as possible.

Not preparing food for others while ill. Clean contaminated surfaces often.

"Your actions are key to staying healthy," Davis said. "Get your seasonal flu vaccine and always practice good hand hygiene. You'll be thankful when you don't get sick."

Additional information about prevention, symptoms and treatment of Norovirus and influenza-like illnesses are posted on the Europe Regional Medical Command website at <http://ermc.amedd.army.mil>, along with links to other health organizations.



Tila Seals is pinned with a Commander's Award by Garrison Manager Karin Santos, Jan. 3.

Garmisch employee honored

Story and photo by
John Reese

USAG Garmisch Public Affairs

GARMISCH, Germany — In a Jan. 3 luncheon ceremony filled with tears, hugs and extra tissues, the garrison said farewell to Army Community Service Program Specialist Martila "Tila" Seals before she departed to assume a challenging ACS position at Fort Drum, N.Y.

Despite short notice, the surprisingly large turnout for the luncheon on the first work day following New Year's Day at the George C. Marshall Center dining facility on Artillery Kaserne quickly became an overflow crowd. Community members took the initiative and opened up the second half of the divided room and filled those tables to capacity as well. Guests included friends and family from across USAREUR and ACS personnel from USAG Grafenwoehr and IMCOM-Europe in Heidelberg.

"You can see by the number of people here today how much Tila is loved by the community," said ACS director Doris Tyler, who had to pause frequently to stem her own tears. "She was instrumental in establishing our ACS offices and always there when needed, from emergencies to training to the entire certification process."

Seals was presented with a Commander's Award by Garrison Manager Karin Santos for her dedicated efforts not only in the performance of her normal duties, but for her vital contribution to standing up the Garmisch ACS office and their perfect score of 100 percent on their first triennial certification. ACS gave her a framed photograph of the Bavarian Alps signed by well-wishers to remind her of her service in Garmisch.

"I wrote down my comments for today because I know I'm going to cry," said Seals before beginning. At one point during her emotional farewell she was joined by Santos and Tyler for hugs and support.

She thanked Santos for being available whenever needed, "especially Sundays, which seemed to be Ms. Santos' day for getting things done," she said.

"I want to thank you for asking a lot of good questions, Ms. Santos," said Seals. "I needed signatures from you to get us through the certification process, and you'd ask 'why do we need this?' or 'how does this help our community?' I appreciated that."

Seals thanked many others for the support she received, including her twin daughters.

"My daughters would find me working at 3 a.m. sometimes working on a speech or a paper, and I'd ask them to read something I'd just finished," said Seals. "I thank them for their feedback."

The ACS is running with a shorter staff since Jan. 10 and asks the community for additional patience and understanding until the positions of Seals and another ACS employee, Kari Sharpe, can be filled again. Sharpe moved to a position with Child, Youth Support Services.

Rocket scientist says reach for stars

Story and photo by
Mark Iacampo
USAG Hohenfels Public Affairs

HOHENFELS, Germany — A Hohenfels High School alumnus returned to her former physics class this month to share stories of her work as a bona fide rocket scientist and to encourage students to reach for the stars. Lyndy Axon, an Air Force Academy Cadet First Class, spoke to Joyce Dusenberry's physics class about the possibilities that exist after graduation.

"The earlier you can start and motivate someone," said Axon, "the better the possibility that they can have their dream come true."

Axon should know. As far back as she can remember she wanted to be an astronaut.

"It's just one of those things I never grew out of," she said.

The dream seems to be within reach. Enrolled in the nation's oldest astronautical engineering program at the Air Force Academy, Axon just recently learned she has qualified for a pilot's slot.

Axon said her parents instilled a belief in her early on that with enough hard work, anything was possible.

"If you don't try your hardest at something, or you don't try at all, you never know what you can do," said Axon. "It's always been one of my philosophies that you might as well try, because it can't put you further back."

Passing on this philosophy is one of the reason's she agreed to speak to Dusenberry's class.

"I went to the Air Force Academy not knowing anything about it," said Axon. "I wish I had known about it



Air Force Academy Cadet First Class Lyndy Axon shares a slide of herself and two colleagues attaching a satellite to a rocket during her presentation to students at Hohenfels High School.

earlier in my life. I would have been prepared. A freshman in high school could be like — this is what I need to do to get somewhere like that."

"Students don't always know about all the possibilities," added Axon's mother, Marion Warner-Axon. "It's really nice to have someone come back that's done something unusual and different, something that might make you say — yeah, I could do that, too."

"Since I've been there I've gotten to do so many things," Axon said, citing examples of studying at the prestigious Aerospace Corporation in Los Angeles and working in and around F-15 jets.

"I'm going to be trying free-fall, earn my jump wings," she said. "There are so many things that you wouldn't think of, that wouldn't be a reason why you went, that are definitely the

reason I stayed and I'm really glad I'm there."

Axon attributes much of her success to the experiences she had as a student at Hohenfels High School.

"Some people think this school's not so great because it's so small," she said. "But I think it's better because it's small. The sheer personal interaction and caring of your teachers — that environment — you know somebody cares about you and is invested in your future."

Axon said the environment at the Academy is similar, with small classes and personal attention from the teachers. She said because of the trust built between students and teachers at Hohenfels High, she found it easier to take advantage of the help offered at the Academy.

"I wasn't scared to ask my teachers for help because I didn't go to a

high school with 5,000 kids where the teacher doesn't even know your name," she said. "That's definitely why I have done really well."

Axon credit's the whole Hohenfels community with helping her succeed, from the school where she was given the opportunity to take online Advanced Placement physics classes, to the health clinic who helped rush her medical reports through for her application.

"So many little pieces that go into it, if you didn't have the support of everyone helping you then it wouldn't have been possible," said Axon.

"We're all very proud of her at this school," said Dusenberry. "It's really good for our students to see alumni from this school come and talk about where they've gone in life and what they've done."

Among other things, Axon shared photos of a recent rocket launch out of Kodiak, Alaska.

"I was in charge of the mechanical team," she said. "We had to take the satellite and attach it to the top of the rocket."

Her real message, though, was about what is possible, and what it takes to get there.

"You have to have your destination in mind so you can set goals accordingly," she said. "Hard work and determination can make your dreams come true."

For Axon, the sky's the limit. Her goals include becoming a pilot, and ultimately an astronaut.

"I'd be perfectly content with my life sitting around designing rockets," she said. "But if you don't try for the big thing, you never know where you could end up."

RETIREEE CORNER

Taxes, postal benefits hot topics for retirees

by Retired Sgt. Maj.
Dave Stewart

Special to the Bavarian News

Welcome to 2011, we greet all the new retired Soldiers that have joined our ranks in the past year. Retirement Services accomplished a lot in 2010 including staging one of the most successful Retirement Appreciation Days in garrison history, thanks to the hard work of the garrison staff with great support from the medical and dental commands. We will continue to work to improve our service to you, including getting out the information retirees and their widows need in the special circumstances of living permanently in Europe and no longer enjoying protection under SOFA.

Taxes

Tax time is approaching and special issues surround retirees living in Germany

as ordinary residents, and many need special assistance from professional tax preparation experts. The Staff Judge Advocate offers provides excellent advice to retirees and annuitants.

A tax treaty exists between the United States and Germany which treats income in different ways. For example, U.S. Social Security is reportable income on the Form 1040 but not taxable under the treaty. This requires special treatment, however, and a professional familiar with the completion of this entry should be consulted to prevent paying taxes twice on the same income.

Also, interest earned on foreign bank accounts as well as investments and German retirement income are taxable and reportable items; again professional advice is recommended. One is also required to report their foreign bank accounts to the Treasury Department ... not

the IRS. Ask the SJA tax experts about this requirement.

Tax forms to bring

These are the some of the forms to bring for your SJA session: Social Security Administration Form (s) SSA 1099-SM-F for benefits received in 2010;

Statements of retired annuities received last year (i.e. 1099R military and if applicable civil service or NAF retirement tax statements).

Don't forget interest, dividend and miscellaneous 1099 forms that are usually issued by banks and IRA withdrawal payments, and, of course, foreign bank statements showing the earned interest for the tax year. Don't worry, the tax experts at SJA know how to pull all of this together correctly and accurately. Now, filing with the German tax authorities is also part of the Tax Treaty between the two countries. The SJA can't

help you with this, but we recommend you get a local tax attorney (Steuerberater) to help you with this part.

Postal benefits

In 2011, retired Soldiers suffered a couple of setbacks in postal privileges. Our Berlin retirees lost their long-held privileges to receive APO retiree mail at the Berlin Consulate when the U.S. Department of State converted its facilities to Diplomatic Post Offices. In other APO news, the Army in Europe Retiree Council (AERC), with support of the USAREUR leadership, continues to work with USEUCOM, the other components, HQDA, and DoD to raise the limit that retired Soldiers living in Europe permanently can mail and receive from one to five pounds.

By the end of this year only CAC holders will have access to AKO, the

AERC is working to clarify the future of the email addresses that retired Soldiers currently have on AKO and the procedures for registering/reregistering AFN decoders.

We serve 1,500 retirees in the garrison footprint that streams from Berlin to Garmisch. The Retiree Council has 11 members from all ranks and we advise the commander on retired Soldiers affairs, we also support the garrison retirement services officer, Keith Harry, who is your first-line office of support. Harry can be reached at 09641-83-8709. Until next time stay healthy, eat your veggies, take daily walks and flex the joints.

Editor's Note: Retired Sgt. Maj. Dave Stewart is president of the Grafenwoehr Garrison Retiree Council and a member of the Chief of Staff of the Army Retiree Council and Army in Europe Retiree Council.



Photo by Erica Hansen

Little pirates learn compassion

GARMISCH, Germany — Swashbuckling students in Jamie Wert's kindergarten class at Garmisch Elementary/Middle School take a break after reading "The Pirate of Kindergarten," recently.

When one student was required to wear an eye patch due to an ongoing eye condition, Wert found a children's book about a little girl who also had to wear an eye patch to correct her eye condition. Wert planned ahead and provided eye patches for the rest of the students so they wouldn't feel left out and so they could also experience what their classmate was going through.

And so a day that could have been uncomfortable and traumatic for one student turned into a celebration for all pirates!

Community support needed for recycling to work

by Ron Toland
USAG Ansbach Public Affairs

ANSBACH, Germany — The recycling program at Barton Barracks in Ansbach has undergone extensive restoration and needs the community to do its part.

Last year, John Hirstein, who is heading up the effort with garrison environmental officials, took on the project to improve and help offset budget shortfalls.

“It didn’t take long to learn that trash was a very costly process,” said Hirstein.

When he began the project, he said he took a footprint survey to find possible improvements with Barton Barracks’ trash process, which included evaluating current trash containers and community recycling behaviors.

“After only two weeks it was evident that there was room for improvements,” he said, noting that part of his process was documenting and recording trash levels and contents with pictures to help show reality and not just opinions.

“I continued documenting our daily levels of trash and looked at locations, pick-up schedules and number of recycling containers,” he said.

After about a six-week evaluation, he contacted the garrison SORT coordinator, proposing several changes, the first being the number of monthly rental containers.

“We were paying for more capacity than our true need and I witnessed on many occasion that the contractor would empty several containers that were half full or sometimes even empty,” said Hirstein.

As an added system measure, grey containers were labeled so residents would fill one first before starting with another one, which did not work.

“I don’t believe people knew any better or even cared about this, they just wanted to get rid of their trash,” said Hirstein.

In addition, Hirstein said he observed many residents removing trash, brought from home, from the trunks of their cars or back seats and simply throwing it into the grey containers and igloos.

“This is a no go since employees should have their household trash picked up at their house,” he said.

Hirstein said he was given several reasons for this behavior: having missed bimonthly pick-up; avoid paying additional household trash fees, even though that cost is included to have it removed at



Photo by Molly Hayden

their place of residence; and some were only paying to have the smallest container at home, but had a larger need, so they would bring it to work.

“Whatever the case, it was obvious there were inappropriate practices going on and we were paying twice for the same trash,” he said. As a result of this practice, grey containers have been locked to prevent this misuse and promote proper recycling efforts; but there is much work still to be done.

“I quickly learned that even reducing to the number of containers, locking them, moving them to new and improved locations wouldn’t completely change behaviors, but we also need to educate the workforce,” he said.

Upon his investigation, Hirstein suggested to recycle the garrison’s policy on trash.

“We wanted it to reflect posting new signage at key locations, helping inform residents and hopefully changing behaviors,” he said.

After these changes were in place, Hirstein con-

Justice Rivera, 8, tests his recycling I.Q., properly disposing of a cardboard box, during a sorting game in celebration of Earth Day last year. Ansbach officials are asking the community to help save money and use resources more efficiently.

tinued to monitor behaviors, taking more pictures, but realized his work was not complete.

“We needed to take this one step further — addressing the internal workforce environment,” he said.

He then went to work investigating different types of trash containers that could be used at the workplace to help SORT recyclables at the source.

And it worked.

“This pilot project at Barton saved the garrison \$29,000 over the past 10 months and will continue each month,” he said, but it was not easy.

“To get people to change or adjust behaviors, especially when locking the grey containers, took some pains, but we are much improved,” he said.

“As an organization, we all need to continue to communicate and educate each other on the need to improve our habits, such as sorting recyclables from true waste, to comply with the law and save money. Germany didn’t learn overnight either,” he said.

With this ongoing effort, Hirstein said that the next steps for the community are to make more improvements across the Ansbach garrison footprint, using lessons learned at Barton to help eliminate issues elsewhere.

“To date, we have reduced the grey containers by 50 percent and reduced the pick-up schedule, which is a continuous process since population at all bases fluctuates based on Soldier movements,” he said. “The more we improve on sorting the recyclables from the grey containers, the more cost effective this will be.”

And this is where the community’s efforts can have a real impact.

“We need your help to take this to the next level,” said Hirstein. “Take the time to sort. If you see something that isn’t right, take the effort to report poor behavior, talk with your friends about how everybody needs to help make changes and be a good neighbor. Get involved, participate and make Ansbach a better and cost efficient workplace,” he said.

Hirstein asks residents to bear with garrison as similar changes are made in the Katterbach area.

Lynch looks at better ways of operating

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Army annual conference, the Army Community Service focus groups I recently held, and the Army Family Survey. This feedback is critical because everything we do is focused on providing Soldiers and families the programs, services and facilities that support their well-being, resilience and readiness.

Asking the right questions

I urge everyone — Installation Management personnel, Soldiers, family members, leaders — to continue to send me solid ideas that help answer the three fundamental questions: Are we doing the right things? Are we doing things right? What are we missing?

The point of asking for input from so many different people is to build a shared vision of where we are going in the next year. I am meeting with senior Installation Management Community leaders this month to develop that vision based on all of this input. The shared vision will enable us to begin with the end in mind. Once we have a shared vision of what right looks like, we can figure out how to get there from here. We can eliminate random activities and focus all our efforts on the initiatives that will have the greatest impact on Soldiers, civilians and family members.

We started 2010 by producing version one of the Installation Management Community’s Campaign Plan. The Campaign Plan laid out a vision, strategy and way ahead for providing the programs, services and facilities that support Soldiers and families. With the Campaign Plan and the three fundamental questions as our guides, we have continually challenged ourselves to improve our performance.

Some of our efforts are visible to those we serve, but many will not be immediately apparent to those outside of our workforce. We will streamline delivery of services to our customers and generate savings that can be applied to Soldier and family programs.

Challenging ourselves

Now, as we build a shared vision of what the Installation Management Community should look like in November 2011 and lay out the plan to achieve that vision, we will continue to challenge ourselves to go beyond what we already know and are comfortable with.

We will continue to look at the shape and size of our organization and workforce. We will continue to reach out and build relationships with others committed to supporting Soldiers and families, including universities, businesses, non-government organizations, and other government agencies.

The process of developing a shared vision can be difficult for some, since it carries the possibility of change, but it can also be energizing, and it is important for us to do if we take our jobs seriously. If we do our job well, if we are good stewards of the resources entrusted to us today, then we will have the resources we need in the future.

An even more important reason is the Soldiers and families we support. We are committed to providing a strong, supportive environment in which they can thrive. We do not chase change for change’s sake, but if the only reason we do something is because we have always done it that way, then we can do better. We owe it to our Soldiers and families to ask what right looks like and to make sure we are on track to get there.

Support and defend.

*Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch
Commander, Installation
Management Command*

U.S. Army Europe warns of ‘phishing’ dangers

by U.S. Army Europe
Public Affairs
News Release

HEIDELBERG, Germany — U.S. Army Europe officials said some USAREUR personnel received e-mail messages recently from a sender falsely claiming to represent Army Knowledge Online and asking them to provide their AKO account details, including passwords.

The “phishing” attack, which warned that recipients who did not respond could lose their AKO accounts, was reported to network security officials.

Department of Defense information assurance experts said phishing is an attempt to commit financial crimes, gather intelligence or disrupt operations by using authentic-looking but phony e-mails and web sites to trick computer users into giving up private or sensitive information. The experts said the best defense against phishing is to avoid opening suspicious e-mails; to never follow links in unsolicited e-mails, and to give sensitive information only to trusted, verified requestors.

For more on phishing and other security and force protection topics is available on USA-REUR’s “vigilance” website at www.hqusareur.army.mil/vigilance.

Defeating those who phish for information

■ Digitally signing e-mails to ensure their integrity is a good practice in general, but particularly vital for messages that ask a user to provide personal or sensitive information. You should avoid opening or answering any e-mail asking for personal, sensitive or other critical information unless the message has been authenticated.

■ Don’t click on links in unsolicited e-mails, especially those asking for personal or sensitive information. Even if you do not supply the requested information, just clicking on a link may enable the sender to access your computer, record keystrokes and capture passwords.

■ Never call telephone numbers listed in suspicious e-mails.

■ Go directly to websites by typing a site’s address into your browser and then bookmarking it.

■ When possible, set up a login “cookie” that helps a site to “remember” your user ID. That way, when you return to the site to sign on, your user ID will appear in the site’s sign-in box, something spoof or phishing websites cannot do. One exception: never set up a login cookie on a public or shared computer.

■ Create a different “hard-to-guess” password for each account you access. Use at least six characters and a mix of letters and numbers. Do not use all or part of your user ID or e-mail address or the names of your spouse, children or pets.

Sources: Information Assurance Technology Analysis Center newsletter, Winter 2008 (IATAC is a DoD-sponsored information analysis center managed by the Defense Technical Information Center and the director of Defense Research and Engineering); the Department of the Navy, and the Defense Travel Management Office.

Dr. Carol makes dentist visits a treat in Schweinfurt

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its dedication to the military community’s youngest residents. Supporting Dr. Carol is the skilled staff of the clinic, and in her new role she says she relies on the valuable help of her team members to combat the problem of poor oral health in children.

“In the States, a lot of children’s bad teeth come from poverty and lack of access to services. But here, the causes can come from stress in the home,” Dr. Carol said. When a parent deploys, the remaining spouse may not have enough time to be a strict enforcer of oral hygiene.

The strains on one person to maintain a household can sometimes erode regimented brushing habits and lead to indulgence in sugary drinks

and food.

“You can almost tell how things are going at home by the condition of children’s teeth,” Dr. Carol added.

She offered some guidelines for keeping healthy teeth, even during stressful times. In addition to brushing twice a day and flossing daily, parents should eliminate sugary and carbonated drinks from children’s diets.

“Milk and water are best to drink,” she said. “Chocolate milk is OK, but only with meals.” Sweet treats between meals are especially discouraged. For snacks try carrot sticks, cheese or yogurt.

The clinic puts a comforting layer onto an experience that many adults even still dread. The children’s-only exam room there is decorated with

multicolored handprints and comic book cutouts, and the overhead televisions play a continuous stream of cartoons.

To lessen children’s fears of the dentist, pediatric dentists operate using a special language to euphemize intimidating dental terms. A cavity is a “sugar bug,” a bite blocker is a “tooth pillow,” the droning sound of a slow-speed drill is a “motorcycle,” a rubber dam to block tooth fragments during drilling is a “raincoat” and perhaps most comforting of all is referring to an upcoming injection into the gums as a “cold spray.”

“The children only get scared about things you scare them with,” said Dr. Carol after giving a brave young patient an injection. These soothing tactics also work on Sol-

diers and adult civilians.

“Sometimes,” she added, “it helps to give adults the same code. The grown-ups who get nervous at the dentist relax a lot when you use children’s words.”

Pitching in during redeployment exams and covering busy times for the other dentists aren’t Dr. Carol’s only encounters with adults. A vital part of every visit with her child patients is a discussion with parents.

“Kids will emulate what they see their parents do,” she said. Habits and good practices start at home and start early. Even when a parent assured Dr. Carol that her daughter avoids sugary drinks, the dentist still urged the mother to not set an example of drinking soda, adding “I’m concerned that she’s going to follow your habits.”